



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of California

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INDICTMENT UNSEALED FOR FRESNO DRUG DEALER
Found with BZP Near a Central Fresno High School

FRESNO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today the unsealing of a federal indictment charging THANONGSACK PHUANGKEO, 31, of Fresno, with possessing with intent to distribute N-benzylpiperazine, also known as BZP, and possessing with intent to distribute the drug within 1,000 feet of DeWolf High School.

The prosecution is the result of an investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Fresno Resident Office and Fresno County Sheriff's Department.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen A. Escobar, who is prosecuting the case, BZP is a powerful stimulant with no medicinal value. The abuse of BZP was first reported in late 1996 in California. It increasingly has been found in similar venues as the popular club drug MDMA or ecstasy. BZP is often sold as MDMA, promoted as an alternative to MDMA, and is targeted to the youth population. The combination of BZP and MDMA can be fatal.

PHUANGKEO faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, a fine of \$1 million, and a term of supervised release for at least three years for each count, if convicted. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

PHUANGKEO is scheduled to appear for arraignment on the indictment before a U.S. Magistrate Judge Gary S. Austin today at 1:30 PM.

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